

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

GENERAL NOTES.

THE TYPE LOCALITY OF *MELLIVORA ABYSSINICA*.

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At the time of publishing the description of *Mellivora abyssinica* the locality from which the type specimen came was known no closer than "vicinity of Adis Ababa, Abyssinia," and was so given in the original diagnosis.* A letter, recently received at the National Museum from the collector, the Hon. Hoffman Philip, gives the exact locality where the specimen was killed as near the "Suksukki River, a small stream which connects Lake Zwai with Lake Hora Schalo; about midway between the two lakes, which with others lie between 7° and 8° north latitude, and between 38° and 39° longitude east. Altitude 4,500 to 5,000 feet."

—N. Hollister.

DISCOVERY OF A FOSSIL DELPHINOID CETACEAN, WITH
TUBERCULATE TEETH.

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Among the fossil remains of cetaceans obtained a short time since by the National Museum from the Miocene formation of Maryland, is a nearly complete skeleton of a porpoise, which, on examination, proves to be a delphinoid form, that is, a species which may be referred to the family Delphinidae, but has tuberculate teeth. This important specimen enables us to solve, in part, the hitherto unsolved problem of the origin of the typical porpoises of to-day. It now appears unquestionable that they were derived from forms having teeth with tuberculate or serrate crowns, rugose enamel, and anterior and posterior longitudinal ridges. This form of teeth is indicated in the recent delphinoid genus *Steno*, in which the crowns have rugose enamel, and, as I have lately discovered, traces of anterior and posterior ridges.

The beak in the fossil species is short and broad, the symphysis of the mandible moderately long, as in *Steno*, the supraorbital plates of the frontal large, the cervical vertebrae all free, the atlas with a single transverse process, the thoracic, lumbar, and caudal vertebrae short, the transverse processes of the lumbar long, narrow, and not expanded at the extremity.

* Smiths. Misc. Coll., Vol. 56, No. 13, p. 1, October 10, 1910.

It is probable that the earlier ancestral forms of the Delphinidae were allied to *Squalodon* and that the families Squalodontidae and Delphinidae are offshoots from a common stem, though from the little that is known of the vertebral column and limbs of the squalodonts the hypothesis still appears tenable that the Delphinidae originated from a stock distinct from the former, but having somewhat similar tuberculate teeth.

The teeth of the fossil species have been compared with the type-teeth of *Delphinodon mento* and *D. wymani*, with the result that it can be referred with certainty to that genus, and is possibly identical with the latter species. The genus *Delphinodon*, therefore, which has hitherto been regarded as belonging to the Squalodontidae, is now to be transferred to the family Delphinidae.

A full description of the fossil skeleton, with illustrations, will be published by the National Museum at an early date.

—*Frederick W. True.*

NOTE ON THE MUS COMMISSARIUS OF MEARNS.

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In 1905, Dr. Edgar A. Mearns described a house mouse from Davao, Mindanao, Philippine Islands, as *Mus commissarius*, basing his account on two specimens.* The U. S. National Museum contains ten additional examples of this animal, two from San Fernando de Union, Luzon, six from Tokio, Japan, and two from the vicinity of Misaki, south of Tokio. The Japanese specimens agree in all essential characters with those from the Philippines, and the series as a whole represents a form easily distinguishable from *Mus musculus* by its cranial characters. The skull is slightly smaller than that of the cosmopolitan animal, but the teeth are disproportionately reduced and the distance between the maxillary tooth-rows is appreciably less. The auditory bullae are also, as pointed out in the original description, somewhat reduced in size.

—*Gerrit S. Miller, Jr.*

ON THE CORRECT NAME OF THE INCA TERN.

Mr. Oberholser has shown (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Quarterly Issue, Vol. 48, part I, May 13, 1905, 61) that *Nenia* Boie is untenable as the generic name for the Inca Tern. He adopts *Inca* Jardine (Contr. Orn. 1850, 32) but unfortunately this name is also untenable on account of *Inca* Lepeletier and Serville (Encycl. Meth., Zoology, Vol. X, 1825, 380) for a genus of Coleoptera. The next available name is apparently *Larosterna* Blyth (Cat. Birds Mus. As. Soc., 1852, 293) and the species will stand as, *Larosterna inca* (Lesson).

—*J. H. Riley.*

* Proc. U. S. National Museum, XXVIII, p. 449, May 13, 1905.